

REMARKS

Present Status of the Application

The Office Action mailed on April 11, 2003 objected to claims 1-2 and 7-9 because of informalities. The Office Action also rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shecter (PN 2,906,070). Claims 10, 11, and 13 are allowed. Claims 2 and 7-9 would be allowable if the informalities are clarified.

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 2 to overcome the rejection and the objection. No new matter adds through the amendments. After entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1, 2, 7-11, and 13 remain pending in the present application. No new matter adds through the amendments.

Oath/Declaration

Attached hereto is a newly executed Declaration with complete priority information.

Drawings

The Office Action indicated that the proposed drawing corrections filed on October 8, 2002 and January 27, 2003 have been approved.

Applicant will submit formal drawings for the amended figures when this application is allowed.

Claim Objections

Regarding the objections to claims 1, 2 and 7-9, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 2 as suggested in the Office Action. Therefore, the objections to claims 1, 2, and 7-9 are overcome.

Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claim Rejections

Turning now to the substantive rejections, the Office Action rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), as being anticipated by Shecter. The Office Action states that Shecter describes every claimed element of claim 1.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection for at least reasons set forth below.

Nevertheless, claim 1 has been amended to expedite the prosecution and allowance of the application. The support for the amendment made to claim 1 can be found in Figs. 1 to 4 and in related descriptions of the specification.

Shecter describes a device for dispensing and counting homogeneous objects. Referring to Fig. 1 of Shecter, the alleged retainer rollers 26, 27 are disposed at different ends of belt 25, so as to suspend the belt 25.

However, according to the present invention as defined in the amended claim 1, the retainer rollers 23 are concentrically disposed with a predetermined groove, referring to Figs. 1 to 5. One aspect of the present invention is to divide a tablet stably and accurately irrelevant to the shape of the tablet. By providing a groove between the retainer rollers 23, the position of the transported tablet with respect to the rotary blade 36 can be accurately determined. This feature is not disclosed or suggested in the Shecter reference. Therefore, it is very clear that the feature recited in claim 1 of the present invention is different from the Shecter reference.

For at least the reasons set out above, Shecter cannot anticipate claim 1 and, therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believe that all pending claims 1, 2, 7-11, and 13 are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a conference would be of value in expediting the prosecution of this application, he is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned counsel to arrange for such a conference.

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Respectfully submitted,


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